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## MADONNA AND CHILD

ATTRIBUTED TO GIULIO ROMANO

(See opposite page)

THE favorite assistant of Raphael, who employed him in the decoration of the *loggia* of the Vatican where he painted the "Creation of Adam and Eve," the "Noah's Ark" and the "Moses in the Bulrushes," had such an eminent place as a mural painter in Rome and afterwards in Mantua that he had little time for easel pictures. And the comparatively few he left were readily taken to be his master's work; for while the latter lived he imposed his style upon him, and it was only after Raphael died that Giulio di Pietro di Filippo, familiarly known as Pippi, struck out a style of his own. The charming picture of the Madonna playing with the Bambino, holding a veil so that the baby can seize it, was considered a Raphael until a closer study of the latter's work made it certain that it is the disciple, not the master who made it.

The picture has been for many generations in the hands of an English family and is in a remarkably perfect state of preservation considering its age. Giulio Romano, so-called because born in Rome, appeared in the world the same year that the Genoese mariner discovered America, and since he died in 1546, he was destined, indeed, to a longer life than his master, but not to reach old age. Vasari tells how genial and kindly he was, how he attracted friends and kept them and it suits exactly such a character to have thought of the infant Jesus as a lively, sportive baby like the one in this picture, instead of a serious infant raising his hand to bless mankind in the character of King of the spiritual world. Italian art has many Bambini with childlike gestures, reaching for a captive bird or for an apple or a ball, but few that show quite the rollicking, enjoying traits we find here. The Madonna shares this spirit, for it is she who is playing with him as she holds the veil—serious enough, yet teasing him to grapple with it. No great symbolism here; no appeal to the fate of the child; no attempt to foreshadow the future but merely a mother and babe, unobserved and unconscious, enjoying themselves in a little tussle full of love and fun.

It belongs to the Raphael view and continues the Raphael tradition, but the drawing is not Raphael's, neither is the way of the brushwork his. There is similarity—but always the subtle difference, as distinctive, when you come to close comparisons, as that between the handwriting of two persons, one of whom has taken to writing like the other, yet remains always himself. The young woman is surely Raphael's mistress La Fornarina, but probably Raphael would not have painted her with the right arm level and straight out. In the Louvre there is a self-portrait by Giulio Romano with curly dark hair and a beard, large black eyes

and a handsome presence. Dresden has a "Holy Family" by him, and Genoa a "Martyrdom of St. Stephen," but the great body of his work is in fresco on the walls of the Vatican, the Castello at Mantua—giving the "History of Troy"—the Palazzo del Té near the same town, and at Marmiruolo nearby. Along with another disciple of Raphael—Penni, known as *il Fattore*—he finished the great ceiling and walls of the "Hall of Constantine" in the Vatican, a work under way when Raphael was cut off in the bloom of his youth.

Giulio, according to Vasari, had uncommon ability to seize and carry out an idea with despatch; he was an ideal assistant to a man like Raphael who was overwhelmed with commissions. All the master had to do was to scratch off a suggestion and Giulio caught the spirit at once and developed it without delay, so that Raphael had merely to put the final touches. Is it possible that Raphael had something to do with this picture, either by suggesting the idea and general composition or by working on it toward the finish? Unfortunately we do not know in what year it was wrought. But on the whole one is inclined to believe that he had no part in it. Very likely it was begun and finished after Raphael was no more.

Giulio Romano was lured away from his native city by Federigo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, and after twenty years of work in Northern Italy as architect, engineer, painter of frescoes and oils, and medalist—sculpture was added to his accomplishments—he was about to return to Rome to take the vacant place of Sangalli as architect of St. Peter's when death overtook him.

This madonna as reproduced here gives well enough the delightful modeling of the Bambino and the beauty of the Virgin, the gayety and archness of the scene from the nursery; but not the coloring, the lovely pure hues of flesh, the strong color-notes of the draperies, the wonderful red and blue of the gown. One must see the original to realize how well the man painted, the all-round artist who has always been placed at a disadvantage as the successor of Raphael and has suffered, sometimes rather unfairly, because he did not measure up to the full fame of the master.

The history of the picture is this: It belonged to one of the branches of the Pignatelli family, whose ancestry included a Pope, whence the Pignatelli papal arms crowning the elaborately carved frame. It appeared a hundred years ago in the collection of Philip John Miles at Leigh Court near Bristol, when it was taken for a Raphael, and was engraved as such in 1822 by John Young. It is mentioned by Waagen and was last in the collection of Sir Cecil Miles, Baronet, of Bristol.





*Courtesy of Satinover Galleries*

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